

My name is Sarah Houston. I am a CODA, Mother of a deaf child, and interpreter. I am in full support of the new laws. As the time draws near for the rules to be "set in stone" I notice the panic with some of the interpreters. At first I thought hey...what's the big deal? Why all the complaining?? Why the panic?? If your skills are there ..you will get the certification u earn. I posed the question and the feedback I received were that these interpreters had been in the field for 20 plus years and had national certification for just as long and didn't think they should have to spend the money time and time again to test when they keep up on their CEUs.

I also attended town hall meetings and heard ITP students worry about work and proper training. I heard the deaf demand higher standards for themselves and our deaf children. As a mother of a 3 year old deaf son I want nothing but the best for my son. But as an interpreter I look at those who test at EIPA 3.5 and think....With just a little more training and incentive they could easily be testing at that 4.0.

I've been pondering these thoughts for a few days now and wondering how we could bridge that gap and have few suggestions that I would like you to think over.

- In education, keep standards high but allow 3.5 in with 1 yr to obtain 4.0 but 3.5 should be working with older students, not K-12 whereas those children are just learning their language.
- Those who have IT/TC with 10+ years of working experience be allowed to test in at their choice of BEI 2 or 3 at lesser rate. If they fail, they must pay full price to retake at a lower level or be satisfied with what they are allowed to do within the grid.
- Work with the community to Provide local workshops and or training needed to obtain the medical, legal, deaf-blind endorsements required.

I also would like to express my concern for the call to wait a few years. I believe interpreters have had more than enough time to prepare for the changes. I had to do the same myself I was out of work for a year from lack of a GED and I did what I needed to do to be in the field I love and starting at the bottom (BEI 1) striving for the top!! (BEI 3). The time is now!! Highly qualified interpreters is what the deaf community is in desperate need of. Too many lives at stake here, too many imprisonments because of miscommunication, too many misdiagnosis, too many children taken away. That time is over!!!

Many many thanks to those who have worked so hard and gave up so much of your time so that my loved ones can have quality access to effective communication. Be blessed and Thank You.

Sarah Houston- BEI 1

